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ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 6HUMAN EVENTS
16 March 19851 WEEK'S NEWS FROM
 **Inside Washington**

How N.Y. Times Hurt U.S. National Interests

Americans concerned about the abuse of power by the liberal media have a new semi-hero—Lt. Gen. John T. Chain Jr., the director of the State Department Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs. In response to a New York Times reporter who disclosed top-secret information, the general has publicly said, in effect, "Shame on you!"

Ironically, the Times reporter, Leslie H. Gelb, was director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs in the Carter Administration. This fact, in Chain's view, made the disclosure even more serious and irresponsible.

In a front-page story on February 13, Gelb reported the contents of a classified U.S. government document on U.S. nuclear weapons strategy. He revealed the names of the countries identified in the document as possible recipients of U.S. nuclear weapons and also described the precise characteristics of the weapons that might be deployed in such an emergency.

The document had been given to the Times by an associate of the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), a controversial think-tank often criticized for cozying up to Communist regimes. How IPS got hold of this document is a question that observers say should be answered by the Justice Department.

As a result of the story, Gen. Chain barred his staff from talking to Gelb. Moreover, Gelb's photograph in the State Department — put there to honor his service in the Carter years — was ordered removed and in its place was inserted the statement:

"Removed for cause. The P.M. [i.e. Gelb] did willingly, willfully and knowingly publish in 1985 classified information; the release of which is harmful and damaging to the country."

Gen. Chain has since backed down from these strong actions. He lifted the order barring members of his staff from talking to Gelb and the statement replacing the photograph has also been removed. However, the photograph itself has not been returned, and Gelb is sore about it.

"I would like the picture restored and my good name restored as well," Gelb told us. He said Gen. Chain's actions were "totally uncalled for."

Gelb's story was written in such a way as to suggest that countries which enjoy the protection of the U.S. nuclear umbrella have the automatic right to know how they might fit into U.S. nuclear defense strategy. But the document itself dealt with a hypothetical situation and the countries named in it — though not told in advance of the plans — would be free to accept or reject the deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons.

Gelb noted in his story that the document had already been the subject of press coverage in other countries and had caused an uproar in some because they had not been "informed" by the U.S. Administration of their possible role. What Gelb's story succeeded in doing was cause even more of an uproar.

One of the countries named in the document, for example, was Canada. On the same day that Gelb's

article appeared, the conservative government of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney came under increasing internal pressure to pledge not to allow U.S. nuclear weapons on Canadian soil under any circumstances.

The fear expressed by Administration officials is that these countries may be pressured into following the example of New Zealand, which recently announced that it would not even allow U.S. warships with nuclear weapons or propelled by nuclear power to dock at its ports.

The role in the controversy played by the Institute for Policy Studies — an organization extremely critical of U.S. nuclear policy — was acknowledged in the part of Gelb's story that was continued back on page 12. He noted that the document, dated 1975, was "apparently" given to authorities in Canada, Iceland, Bermuda and Puerto Rico by William M. Arkin, who was identified as just "a nuclear weapons expert at the Washington-based Institute for Policy Studies." Arkin also "made available" the document to the Times.

When we asked why he did not disclose the left-wing orientation of the IPS, Gelb said it wasn't his general practice to describe organizations on either side of the political spectrum. "Once you get into the business of labeling," he said, "that is a way of discrediting or pigeonholing." He said what an organization says "should speak for itself."

But in the opinion of internal security and intelligence experts, the IPS is an organization that should be exposed and discredited. The group has been criticized over the years for serving Communist aims.

In 1983, for example, when the IPS staged a "conference on disarmament" in cooperation with two agencies of the Soviet regime, 10 members of

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